

Message Text

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43

ACTION AID-05

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 EB-07 IGA-01 L-02 ARA-06 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4448

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ESTC, MO, CU

SUBJECT: CUBA SHIPPING: INVOLVEMENT OF MOROCCAN SHIP "MARRAKECH"

REF: A. STATE 276077

B. RABAT 6234 (DECEMBER 27, 1974)

C. STATE 3406

1. ECOUN TOOK OCCASION OF AMBASSADOR'S IMPENDING RETURN TO ESCALATE LEVEL OF INQUIRY AT FONMIN BY CALLING ON CHIEF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS DIVISION SEBTI TO LEARN RESULTS GOM INQUIRIES RE "MARRAKECH" INVOLVEMENT CUBA TRADE. SEBTI FULLY BRIEFED AND GAVE FOLLOWING RESPONSE AND ASSURANCE:

A. GOM HAS GIVEN STRICT INSTRUCTIONS TO GOVERNMENT-OWNED COMANAV THAT NO RPT NO CARGOES DESTINED FOR CUBA TO BE CARRIED. NO VIOLATIONS BY COMANAV SO FAR AS GOM AWARE.

B. PRIVATE SHIPPING LINES E.G. "MARRAKECH" OWNED BY SMNF OF CASABLANCA HAVE BEEN GIVEN SIMILAR INSTRUCTIONS. TO KNOWLEDGE GOM, PRIVATE COMPANIES HAVE DONE CREDITABLE JOB OF COMPLIANCE. ONLY THREE VIOLATIONS KNOWN TO GOM IN MANY YEARS. (FYI: THIS COUNT IN CONFORMITY EMBASSY RECORDS. END FYI). IN MOROCCO, SHIP CAPTAINS HAVE MORE INDEPENDENCE IN SEEKING CARGOES THAN IN SOME OTHER COUNTRIES. WITH PERSONNEL TURNOVER, ETC., SOME ALLOWANCE MUST BE MADE FOR HUMAN ERROR.

C. WHILE CONTINUING TO COMPLY TO FULLEST DEGREE WITH US REQUIREMENTS, GOM WISHES BRING TO ATTENTION US AUTHORITIES NEW PROBLEMS BEING POSED BY THIS US LEGISLATION. FIRST,

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MOROCCO IMPORTING INCREASINGLY LARGE VOLUME SUGAR. IN TALKS

WITH CUBANS, SHIPPING PROBLEM HAS INEVITABLY COME UP. GOM WILL BE FACING INCREASING PRESSURE. SECOND, COMPETITION FOR CARGOES INCREASING AS WORLD TRADE FLOWS DIMINISH. THIS OCCURRING AT TIME WHEN GOM INFLUENCE OVER PRIVATE COMPANIES LESS THAN SOME YEARS AGO. SOME CAPTAINS MAY FROM TIME TO TIME FLAUNT REGULATIONS IF THEY THINK THEY CAN GET AWAY WITH IT. D. GOM HAS REMINDED SMNF THAT NO-CUBA-TRADE INSTRUCTION REMAINS IN FORCE AND HAS REQUESTED FULL REPORT ON CARGO AND CIRCUMSTANCES AUGUST-SEPTEMBER "MARRAKECH" INCIDENT.

2. EMBASSY BELIEVES GOM MAKING EFFORT COMPLY WITH FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT REQUIREMENTS AND FULLY AWARE WHAT FAILURE TO DO SO WOULD MEAN FOR ANTICIPATED P.L.-480 AND OTHER AID REQUESTS AT TIME OF SEVERE CROP FAILURE HERE. WHILE OVERALL COMPLIANCE RECORD GOOD, GOM COULD EXERCISE STRONGER SANCTIONS ON OCCASIONAL VIOLATORS. AT SAME TIME THIS WOULD BE EXPECTING MUCH OF RATHER INEFFICIENT MOROCCAN ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM. EMBASSY BELIEVES SEBTI NOT EXAGGERATING WHEN HE SAYS ECONOMIC PRESSURES GROWING AND THAT NOTHING WOULD RELIEVE GOM MORE THAN US POLICY SHIFT RE CUBA. IN MEANTIME, WE ACCEPT ASSURANCES IN GOOD FAITH THAT INCIDENT WILL NOT BE REPEATED WITHIN SCOPE OF GOM AND USG ABILITY TO MONITOR COMPLIANCE.

3. ASSUME THAT EXPLANATION AND STEPS TAKEN ACCEPTABLE WASHINGTON AGENCIES.
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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